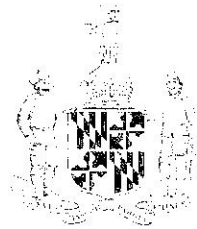


PAT YOUNG  
CHAIR

SHELLY HETTMAN  
VICE CHAIR



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401  
BALTIMORE COUNTY HOUSE DELEGATION

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DANA M. STEIN  
CHARLES E. SYDNOR, III  
KATHY SZELIGA

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Anne Kaiser  
Chair, House Way & Means Committee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1912

The Honorable Eric Ebersole  
Chair, Finance Resources Subcommittee  
House Office Building, Room 131  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1912

Dear Madame Chair:

On behalf of the Baltimore County House Delegation, I write to express our opposition to the passage of House Bill 990, entitled Video Lottery Terminal Proceeds - Racetrack Facility Renewal Account - Use of Funds (HB 990), without transparent and genuine protections for the future of Pimlico Race Course ("Pimlico") and the neighborhoods surrounding this historic race track. We stand with our colleagues in the Baltimore City House Delegation and urge a solution that balances and protects the significant regional interests related to the Preakness and Pimlico.

**Background**

Historic Pimlico Race Course, home of the Preakness Stakes, first opened its doors on October 25, 1870, making it the second oldest racetrack in the nation, behind Saratoga. Pimlico has played host to racing legends for over a century, where Baltimoreans have witnessed legendary horses such as Man o' War, Sir Barton, Seabiscuit, War Admiral, Citation, Secretariat, and Cigar compete in historic races.

The Preakness Stakes was introduced in 1873 when Pimlico held its first spring meet. The race has since become one of the most important in American Thoroughbred Racing and is the second leg of the American Triple Crown. The "Run for the Black-eyed Susans," the second largest equestrian event in North America, is embedded in Baltimore and our State's cultural history.

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The Jacob France Institute indicated that the Preakness Stakes generates \$52.7 million annually in revenue for the State of Maryland; Baltimore City economic impacts total \$48.8 million in City economic activity and supports \$32 million in labor income. The cultural and economic importance of the Preakness to Baltimore and the surrounding region cannot be understated.

**HB 990**

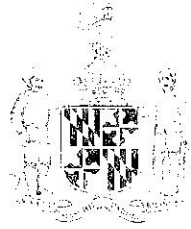
HB 990 lays the foundation for The Stronach Group ("TSG") to move the Preakness Stakes to Laurel Park ("Laurel") and cease operations at Pimlico. This legislation authorizes the Maryland Economic Development Corporation to issue bonds (estimated by TSG at \$120 million) or other financing to be used to transform TSG's Laurel Park into a "super track." TSG, through Chief Operating Officer Tim Ritvo, notified Governor Hogan on February 8, 2019, that "the Pimlico facility has reached the end of its useful life as a major event venue."

We respectfully disagree with TSG's legislative proposal and believe it runs contrary to the stated intent of the General Assembly, which recognizes the rich history of the Preakness and its ties to Baltimore. Maryland law dictates that the race shall be run in Baltimore and "may be transferred to another track in the State only as a result of a disaster or emergency." MD Ann. Code Bus. Reg. Title 11-520. TSG has made a business decision to invest heavily in Laurel Park; however, that business decision should not undermine the clear legislative intent that the Preakness stay in Baltimore.

We are also concerned that HB 990 does not protect the neighborhoods surrounding Pimlico as TSG has no statutory requirement to stabilize or transition the racetrack in the event Preakness is moved. Looking to the City of Bowie's experience with its abandoned track and TSG's failure to repurpose or even maintain the grounds for many years, it is prudent to provide explicit protections for the vulnerable neighborhoods that surround Pimlico. If HB 990 receives a favorable report, we urge strong protections and a clear mandate to protect Baltimore from the nuisance of an abandoned track.

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**Conclusion**

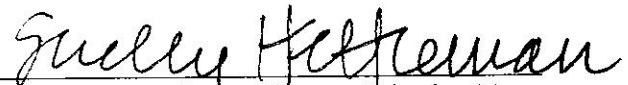
The Baltimore County Delegation fully supports strong regional partnerships that enhance Maryland culturally and economically. We firmly assert that state instrumentalities should be used to attract new business from out of state, but not utilized to divide local jurisdictions in an economic tug-of-war. We strongly urge TSG to negotiate a solution which preserves the rich culture and history of the Preakness and Pimlico; we urge a solution that balances the interests of Baltimore City, our region and TSG's private affairs. We are confident a compromise is possible. Maryland racing can, and should, serve as an example of how mutual prosperity can be achieved for the industry and the surrounding region. This should not be a goal we endeavor to achieve but the standard by which we judge success.

Thank you for your consideration of our opposition to HB990 - - as presently drafted.

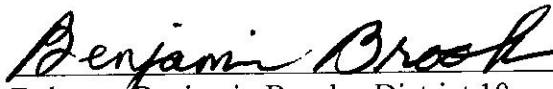
Respectfully,



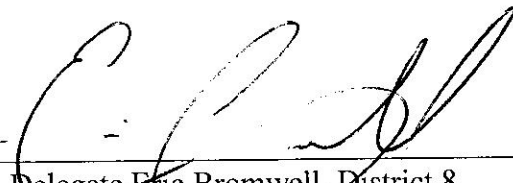
Delegate Pat Young, District 44B  
Chairman, Baltimore County House Delegation



Delegate Shelly Hettelman, District 11  
Vice-Chair



Delegate Benjamin Brooks, District 10



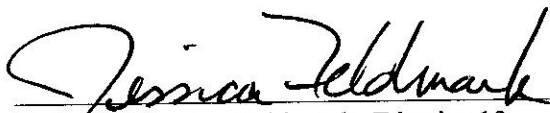
Delegate Eric Bromwell, District 8



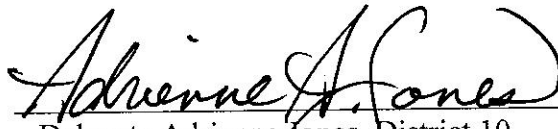
Delegate Steve Lafferty, District 42A




Delegate Charles Sydnor, District 44B



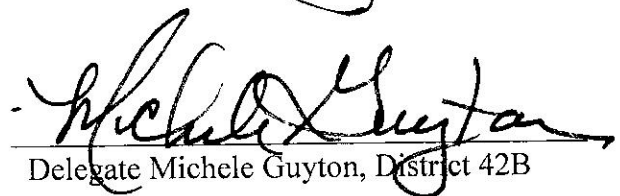
Delegate Jessica Feldmark, District 12



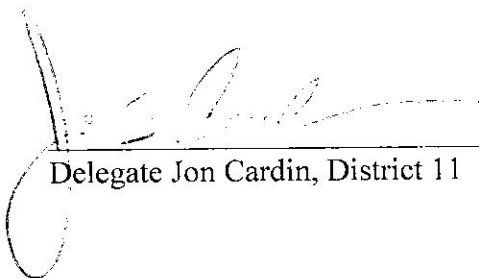
Delegate Adrienne Jones, District 10



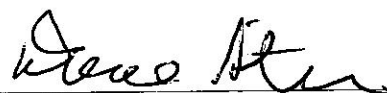
Delegate Terri Hill, District 12



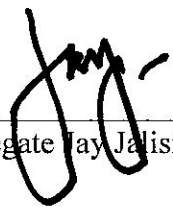
Delegate Michele Guyton, District 42B



Delegate Jon Cardin, District 11

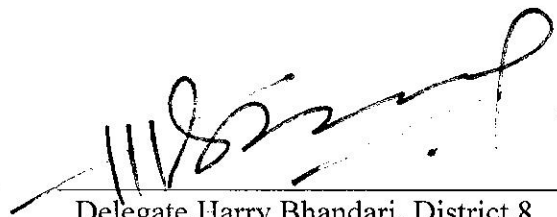


District Dana Stein, District 11



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Delegate Jay Jalisi, District 10



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Delegate Harry Bhandari, District 8